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Indian Bread Root.

An article recently appeared in the "Waterloo Observer," N. Y., which has some botanical interest, relating to a root which the Seneca Indians called *Ooktehaw* a century ago, and from which they made bread. The ground nut, *Apios tuberosa*, was well known, and formed the totem of the potato clan of the Senecas a hundred years earlier. This was the principal edible root of the New York Indians. Mr. Horatio Hale properly considered the word generic, and thought that *Ooktehaw* bread was made from roots in general. Mr. George H. Harris, of Rochester, N. Y., now thinks differently, and claims that the root in question is a Western plant, which he terms *Psoralea esculenta*, otherwise the Prairie Potato, or Bread Root. I suppose it to be a plant which I have seen, but do not know it by this name, nor do I think any *Psoralea* has been reported in New York. As the root was in common use it could not have escaped the notice of botanists and others, whatever its name. Mr. Harris claims that a similar root was used by the early settlers in the Genesee Valley, and was called *O-ki-tah-ak-gua*, or Bread Root. There may be a mistake both in the meaning of the word and the plant.

The ground nut is not now common, and I do not find it in my list of Onondaga names, but *Oke-ta-ha* appears, applied to the beet, and meaning simply a root. *Ook-ta-ha-wa-ne* is the artichoke, and means Big root. The Cayugas called the turnip *Ok-te-ha*. This will show the generic use of the word mentioned by a prisoner among the Senecas, and, as Mr. Hale supposed, *Ook-te-haw* bread was that made of any edible root. Of those in use here the ground nut was held in the highest estimation, but it was not the only kind eaten in time of need.

W. M. BEAUCHAMP.

Geographical Distribution of *Phlox bifida*.

The marked increase in late years of local collectors in the region east of the Mississippi River has tended to greatly increase our knowledge of the geographical range of the native species of this region, especially those that have a tendency to be local in their distribution. As a result, new stations for our rarer plants are constantly coming to light; but yet, with our ever-increas-

ing knowledge in this direction, we are compelled to admit that there are certain species that still must be considered as local in their distribution, and of this class is *Phlox bifida*.

I am inclined to think this species more limited in its geographical range than has been generally supposed.

In fact, I feel justified in concluding that this very distinct *Phlox* is confined to Illinois. The writer would be glad to receive any information that would support or destroy such conclusion.

In Gray's "Flora of North America," its habitat is given as "Prairies of Illinois and Missouri;" but I am inclined to think the Missouri habitat very questionable.

In Tracy's "Catalogue of Plants of Missouri," *Phlox bifida* is included, but no locality is mentioned, and it is inserted on the ground of the Missouri habitat in "Gray's Manual, fifth edition."

From the fact that the species was named by Prof. Beck, who collected in the neighborhood of St. Louis, Mo., at one time, I was led to address Prof. Trelease of that city, with the idea of ascertaining, if possible, its existence in that locality. In answering, he said, in looking over Dr. Engelmann's check-list of Missouri plants, he could find no mention of it, nor was it in Riehl's herbarium of Missouri plants at Shaw's Garden.

It would hardly seem possible that such an enthusiastic and accurate botanist as Dr. Engelmann, with the opportunities of his many years residence in St. Louis, would have overlooked it if native in that vicinity. Though a rare plant in Illinois, it is found in several widely separated localities. Patterson's catalogue gives the following localities: "Common on lake shore, south of Chicago, Babcock; Kankakee County, Hill; Peoria, Brendel; Mason and Cass, Mead; Menard, Hall; Union, Forbes." The lake shore habitat makes it possible that it might extend along the shore either into Indiana or Wisconsin.

It is very abundant in a deep, rocky defile known as "Rocky Glen," about two miles distant from Peoria. It is a profuse bloomer, and in May the steep sides are clothed with the delicate star-like flowers. About a mile distant from this locality it grows more sparingly on a steep, sandy bank. As neither locality is susceptible of cultivation, it would appear as if destined to exist here forever.

FRANK McDONALD.